

What I Claim Is:

1. A knife, comprising:

a handle;

5 a blade movably secured to the handle so that the blade is
movable along a path of travel between a closed position and an
open position;

a latch member movable between a locked position in which it
extends into the path of travel of a portion of the blade thereby
preventing movement of the blade and an unlocked position in
10 which it does not interfere with movement of the blade;

a gas spring positioned to bias the latch member into the
locked position, the gas spring comprising a movable wall that
partially defines a substantially sealed, variable volume chamber
containing a gas; and

15 wherein movement of the latch member from the locked
position to the unlocked position causes the movable wall to
reduce the volume of the chamber, thereby compressing the gas to
create spring force against the latch member.

2. A folding knife, comprising:

20 a handle having a pivot shaft;

a blade movably secured to the handle so that the blade is
pivotable about the pivot shaft along a path of travel between a
closed position and an open position;

a latch member movable between a locked position in which it extends into the path of travel of a portion of the blade thereby preventing pivotal movement of the blade and an unlocked position in which it does not interfere with pivotal movement of the
5 blade;

a gas spring positioned to bias the latch member into the locked position, the gas spring comprising a movable wall that partially defines a substantially sealed, variable volume chamber containing a gas; and

10 wherein movement of the latch member from the locked position to the unlocked position causes the movable wall to reduce the volume of the chamber, thereby compressing the gas to create spring force against the latch member.